

Citizens' Efficiency Commission Recommendation: Law Enforcement in Sangamon County



Executive Summary

Municipalities and law enforcement agencies have experienced continued budgetary strains over the last several years. This trend will likely continue, creating additional strain on the existing system for law enforcement. **Without pursuing cost-reduction opportunities, the CEC finds it unlikely that local governments in the Sangamon County region will be able to sustain their forces at their residents' desired level of service.**

- The CEC builds upon years of conversation related to local law enforcement functions. Often these conversations have focused on a single regional law enforcement agency.
- Although the CEC thoroughly examined efficiency opportunities related to municipal operations, the urbanized area covered by Springfield and Sangamon County forces, and the opportunity for a broader regional force, it **did not** have a preconceived idea of what the best arrangement for law enforcement would be.

The CEC has explored and developed a baseline analysis, highlighting five key recommendations for local review and implementation. This baseline analysis does not completely cover all research needs for law enforcement in the region, a task that the CEC felt was beyond its capacity.

However, the CEC's five-fold recommendation provides localities with substantive, meaningful recommendations to increase effectiveness and reduce costs, in order to ultimately improve law enforcement in the region. **These recommendations should be considered as a cohesive unit and as an interim step toward additional review and solutions.**

Overview of Existing Agencies

- Numerous jurisdictions are responsible for providing law enforcement in Sangamon County, including the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office, Springfield Police Department, a number of special forces, and mid- and smaller-sized municipal forces.
- Compared to other regions, Sangamon County's law enforcement costs are high. Primary expenses and concerns the CEC identified in its preliminary review included: personnel costs, personnel issues and associated legal liability, collective bargaining arrangements and associated limitations, pension costs, equipment needs, and technological needs.
- Although not all of these key expenses are problematic in all jurisdictions, they are important considerations for the region.

Overview of Existing Functions

The CEC review law enforcement administration and support functions, investigations divisions, and operations for opportunities to collaborate and reduce costs.

- Support and administrative functions provide opportunities for savings, particularly in terms of technological updates. Shared administration, procurement, and grant-writing are other areas in which cooperation could increase.

- Evidence and records are divisions where additional sharing may be of benefit.
- Specialized functions also should be provided on a regionalized, rather than local basis. A major cases unit could also provide value and efficiency for the region.
- Patrol functions are chiefly a concern in the urbanized area due to questions about jurisdictional overlap and “holes in the donut” in the urbanized area, and collaboration between the SPD and SCO should be explored.
- Smaller municipalities have embraced a more personalized, “neighborhood” model for policing. This model is highly valued by residents, but may not remain financially feasible in all departments.

Alternatives

A broad range of alternatives exist for improving law enforcement efficiency in the region. The CEC addresses these alternatives which range from cooperation on specific functions and in select departments to more far-reaching structural changes. The options provided address opportunities to:

- improve efficiency within individual jurisdictions through technological improvements or time reallocation;
 - address declining resources on a local basis through cross-jurisdictional cooperation and shared specialized functions;
 - improve resource use in the urban area by exploring city-county cooperation or consolidation.
- These alternatives represent a baseline analysis or preliminary options for review. They have been explored in order to provide a foundation for future action that meets the needs of a nuanced and complex set of local jurisdictions.
- Without pursuing these alternatives, local governments are unlikely in the long term to have resources to sustain desired service levels.

In light of the research presented in its recommendation document, the CEC recommends that local leaders and law enforcement agencies pursue increased regionalization of law enforcement functions by undertaking the following actions:

- 1) Expand technological improvements to eliminate dated, hand-written records processes and duplication of labor.**
- 2) Create a shared regional task force for highly specialized functions including training, crime scene investigation, major cases, tactical forces, and similar activities.**
- 3) Create shared divisions for regional administrative support, records, and evidence, potentially adding other support functions.**
- 4) Consolidate select municipal departments into combined local departments to manage scarce resources.**
- 5) Engage the services of an independent consultant, working in conjunction with the Regional Leadership Council, to conduct a thorough analysis of SPD-SCSO consolidation that builds upon the CEC's existing work.**